



Pierre Olivier Joseph Coomans

1816-1889

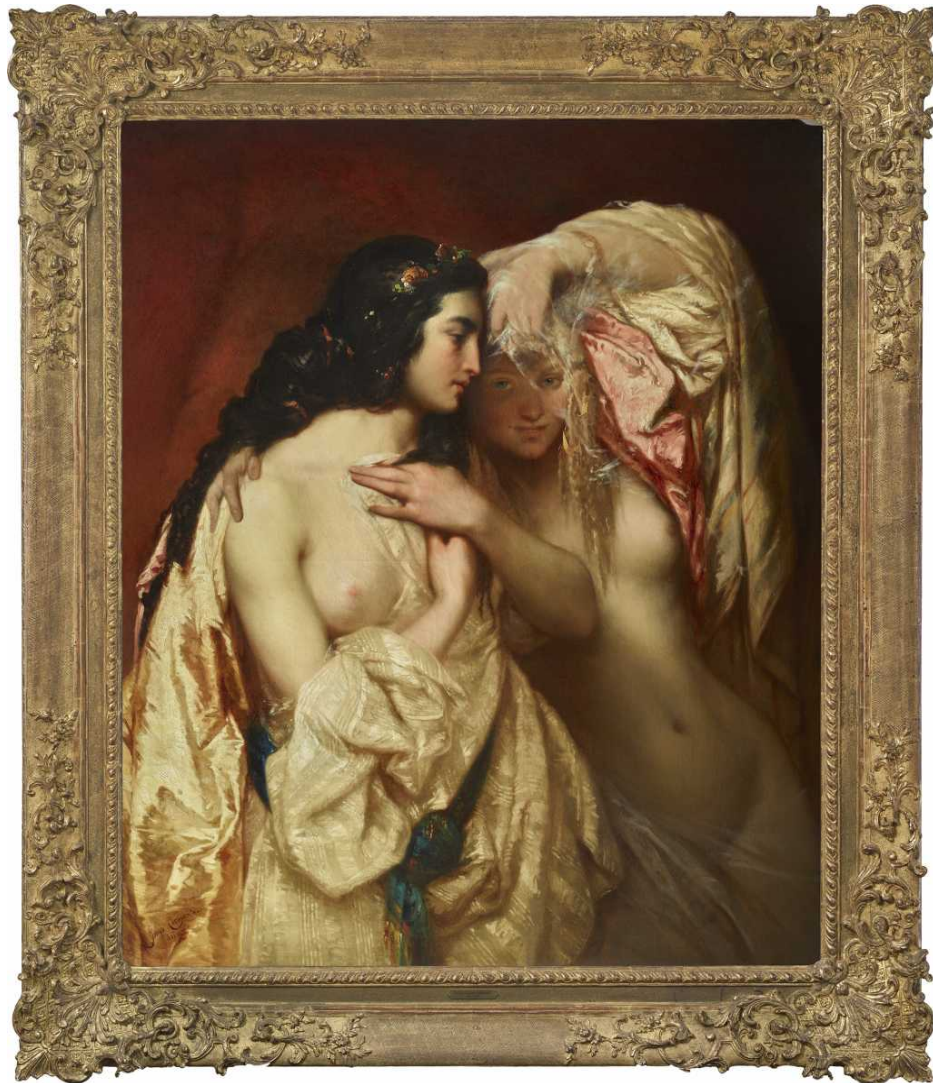
Secret Love

Oil on canvas signed and dated 1857 lower left

Dimensions : 125 x 105,5 cm

Dimensions : 49.21 x 41.34 inch

Origin : Private Collection, Germany (1983 acquired at Neumeister)



Dimensions with frame : 153 x 133,5 cm
Dimensions with frame : 60.24 x 52.36 inch

Biography

Pierre Olivier Joseph Coomans was a Belgian painter, illustrator and engraver. He was born in June 1816 in Brussels. Student of Pierre de Hasselaere at the Academy of Gand and then of Nicaise de Keyser and of the Baron Wappers at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Anvers, he specialized in history painting and genre scenes.

In 1841, he exhibited " The Fall of Jerusalem by the Crusaders " and achieved great success, as well as with " The Battle of Absalon " in 1842.

Between 1843 and 1845, he was sent by the Queen Louise-Marie of Orleans in Algeria to join the French army in Kabylie. There, he worked for the general Marechal Thomas-Robert Bugeaud and met the painter Horace Vernet. Coomans brought numerous sketches back from his journey, making his first steps in orientalism. These sketches gave birth to " Arab Women dancing ", " Landscape of the province of Constantine " but also " Battle of Attila in the catalaunic fields ".

In 1854 and 1855, he joined the general Aimable Pélistier and worked during the Crimean War as a military painter, making studies for " The Battle of Alma " in 1855.

After this military painting career, he established himself nearby Naples and was fascinated by the ruins of Pompei. This discovery changed his painting and his topics. He gradually left Orientalism for genre and family scenes inspired by antiquity.

After visiting Greece and Turkey, he moved to Paris in 1860 where he developed a classic and academic style. He frequently exhibited at the Salon where he was particularly noticed for his painting " The Dream ".

After a stay in Philadelphia and New-York from 1888 to 1889 where he mainly made portraits, Coomans established himself in Boulogne-sur-Seine near Paris.

Coomans also illustrated books like " The History of the French Revolution ", " My prisons " by Sivio Pellico, " The Belgian depicted by themselves " or " The History of Belgium " written by his brother, Jean-Baptiste Coomans. This work contributed to his great reputation in Belgium.

He died on December 1889 in Boulogne-sur-Seine.

Our painting "Secret love" highlights the sensuality of Coomans' palette, tempered by an academic style becoming stronger in 1857. The virtuosity of the technique is at his most beautiful expression with the colors, the hairstyles and the fabric rendering.

Museums

Royal museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Bruxelles

Royal Palace, Bruxelles

Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart

Bibliography

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Académie royale de Belgique, " Nouvelle biographie nationale ", volume 14, Bruxelles, 2018, p.61-63